

# Sentence Expansion For The

BY ALICE BRIMHALL

Mrs. Brimhall, who works with culturally disadvantaged children in California, demonstrated the following sentence expansion technique at a CCH summer TESL workshop. These expansion exercises should prove helpful to ESL teachers as this plan could be adapted to any age level in teaching English syntax. Expansion could be limited to single word modifiers or could include phrases and clauses. It would also be useful in teaching compound subjects and verbs, the position of determiners and modifiers, and the normal sequence of the prepositional modifiers of place, manner, frequency, and time.

Most of the children who attend my reading workshop have many learning problems. Among the problems are:

1. The lack of motivation. They see little need for speaking, reading or writing in Standard English.
2. They are poor readers.
3. Their sentence structure is

very limited in both speaking and writing Standard English.

The purpose of this type of lesson is to help overcome some of these difficulties through a manipulative oral exercise.

This kind of exercise adds a little variety to the usual drills, all children can participate, and the child is

## English

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The following chart may prove helpful for teaching English word order in expanding

Pre-art.	Art. (Only 1 Choice)	Poss.	Demon.	Ordinals	Cardinals	Superlative or Comparative
all	the	my	this	first	one	more
only	a	our	that	second	two, etc.	most
both	an	your	these	next	several	fewer
just		his	those	last	many	fewest
		her		final	few	less
		its			half	least
		their				

All or any of the above may further modify the noun with the addition 'of'.

*Examples:*

*Although sentences like the following use all of these categories, usually*

*All, my, final, few, most, modern, large, square, red,*

*Just, those, final, few, more, old-fashioned, small, narrow,*

# Elementary Level

motivated through being able to move word cards around himself. He has drill in reading and pronouncing the controlled vocabulary. The child is directed toward making more complex and interesting sentences through expansion and is helped in patterning (word order) and intonation.

The sentence expansion lessons must be adapted to the abilities of the children. The teacher must be cautious in the selection of the words and phrases that are to be used.

The few examples included in this lesson just serve as a guide. The exercises can be made simple or complex, depending on the children. It is better to have short drills and often, rather than to make one long lesson.

After experimenting with one or two lessons, the teacher will become more aware of questioning and

choosing sentences for expansion. A series of English books entitled Oral and Written Composition by John H. Treanor, Grades 3 to 6, MacMillan Co., 1968, may offer some help in sentence expansion.

## Materials

Small pieces of paper or cardboard upon which to write words. (Either have two different colors of paper, or use two different colors of ink for writing the words.)

Envelopes to keep each set of words.

1. Give each child an envelope containing the words to be used. If, however, the class is large, just distribute little blank pieces of paper (two different colors) and let the children write the words on the cards. Sometimes this procedure is best because the child reinforces his reading of the word by writing it;

## Word Order

### C. PACK

sentence pattern drills.

Quality or Characteristic	Size	Shape	Color	Modifying Nouns	Noun
modern	large	square	brown	brick	fireplace
surprising	small	narrow	white	redwood	house
happy	tall	round	etc.	etc.	etc.
overripe	tiny	thin			
etc.	etc.	etc.			

a choice is made from the sections. The order remains the same.

brick fireplaces were sold immediately.

white wall boards were left.

also, each child can keep his words, take them home, and work with them.

2. Teacher tells the children to take all the words out of the envelope and separate the words into two piles according to their colors. (For these example lessons the colors pink and green will be used.)

### Example A

green words - look, at, the, apple  
pink words - big, red, up, in, the, tall, tree.

3. Children then read the words aloud in the green pile. Then they read the words aloud in the pink pile. Teacher listens for mistakes in word recognition and pronunciation. She gives assistance where needed.

4. Teacher: Now take all the green words and make a sentence that says Look at the apple. (base sentence)

The children then read the sentence and the teacher offers help when needed.

5. Teacher: Now look in your pile of pink words and find a word that tells the size of the apple and place that word in your sentence. (Look at the **BIG** apple.)

Again the children read the sentence aloud and the teacher assists where needed.

6. Teacher: Now find a word that tells the color of the apple and place that word in your sentence. (Look at the big **RED** apple.)

The children read the sentence aloud. Teacher assists if needed.

7. Teacher: Now find the words that will tell us where the apple is and place these words in your sentence.

(Look at the big red apple **UP IN THE TALL TREE.**)

8. Teacher: What word tells us the size of the tree? (tall) Do you have **TALL** in the correct place?

Each child reads the completed sentence aloud. Teacher helps where needed.

9. The children can put all the words back into the envelope, or the teacher can call out individual

words to be replaced. This gives added drill in word recognition.

Example A of this lesson is a simple one and can be used when a child is about on the primer level of reading.

### Example B

1. Same as previous step 1.

2. Same as previous step 2.

Example B:

Green words: the kitten, sleeps

Pink words: little, yellow, peacefully, in, the, cardboard, box, under, the table.

3. The children read the words aloud in the green pile, then they read the words aloud in the pink pile. Teacher listens for mistakes in word recognition and pronunciation. She just assists where needed. If a child has difficulty with some words don't labor over it too long. He will encounter the word several more times in the lesson.

4. Teacher: Now take all the green words and make a base sentence that says--The kitten sleeps.

The children read the sentence aloud and teacher offers help when needed.

5. Teacher: Now look at your pile of pink words and find a word that tells us the color of the kitten and place it in your base sentence. (The **YELLOW** kitten sleeps.)

Again the children read the sentence aloud and the teacher assists where needed.

6. Teacher: Now find a word that tells us **HOW** the kitten sleeps and place that word in your sentence. (The yellow kitten sleeps **PEACEFULLY**. Some children may have **PEACEFULLY**, the yellow kitten sleeps.) If a child does have a different construction for his sentence and it is acceptable be sure to compliment him.

The children read the sentence aloud and the teacher helps where necessary.

7. Teacher: Now find a word that will tell the size of the kitten and place it in your sentence. (The **LITTLE** yellow kitten sleeps peacefully.)

Again the children read the sentence and the teacher helps where needed.

8. Teacher: Now find words that will tell us in what the kitten sleeps, and place those words in your sentence.

(The little yellow kitten sleeps peacefully IN THE CARDBOARD BOX.)

9. Teacher: What kind of a box is it? (cardboard) Do you have CARDBOARD in the correct place?

Again the children read the sentence aloud and the teacher checks word order, intonation, and word recognition as she goes around.

10. Teacher: Now find the words that tell us WHERE the box is. Put those words in the sentence. (The little yellow kitten sleeps peacefully in the cardboard box UNDER THE TABLE.)

The children read the sentence aloud again. Teacher helps where needed.

11. Teacher: All of you have a good long sentence. We call this an expanded sentence. We started with just the green words—THE KITTEN SLEEPS, and by adding words and phrases we were able to make this an interesting sentence. There are more ways to make this sentence say about the same thing. See if you can rearrange some of the words (change the words around) and make the sentence say the same thing but in a different way or order. Some possible arrangements might be:

1. In the cardboard box, under the table, sleeps the little yellow kitten.

2. Peacefully, the little yellow kitten sleeps in the cardboard box under the table.

3. Under the table in the cardboard box sleeps the little yellow kitten.

The children will read their sentences aloud. Compliment them on different arrangements.

12. Children can put words away as in Step 9 of Example A.

## Conclusion

These are only two examples of what a teacher can do with sentence expansion. Later on punctuation can be added, or word substitution. The teacher can make her lesson simple or complex to meet the needs of her group. After manipulating the words the children might write the expanded sentence and the various ways in which it can be phrased, but it is most important that the oral reading come first.